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Soviets tell of expelling spy; U.S. issues denial

MOSCOW [AP] — The Communist Party newspaper Pravda reported Sunday that an American diplomat in Leningrad had been expelled from the Soviet Union for spying, but U.S. officials said there had been no such expulsions from Leningrad in several years.

Pravda identified the diplomat as "Vice Consul D. Shorer," and said he was seized by KGB secret police while retrieving a "magnetic container" of information placed in a hiding place in the northern Russian city by a Soviet double agent.

"The case, if it occurred at all, is out of the past and not anything recent. It didn't happen in the last two years and no one recalls anything like it in recent years," a U.S. Embassy spokesman in Moscow told the Associated Press.

Shorer's name was not in reference books listing American diplomats who have served in the Soviet Union in recent years. Nor was there mention of another diplomat named by Pravda, "second secretary Douglas Terence," who allegedly recruited the Soviet citizen for the CIA while both were living in an unnamed African country.

THE SOVIET UNION sometimes publicizes spy cases long after the fact, and the Pravda story did not give a date for the expulsion.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Sue Pittman said, "There has been no expulsion from Leningrad in the last several years."

The report came amid a flurry of espionage charges between the two nations. Two Soviet envoys at United Nations headquarters in New York were expelled from the United States last week and another Soviet diplomat in Washington left the country ahead of an expulsion order.

On March 10, American diplomat Richard Osborne was ordered to leave the Soviet Union after being caught in Moscow with an illegal radio transmitter, Tass news agency said.

THE U.S. EMBASSY in Moscow said Osborne was a first secretary in the economics section, but U.S. officials have declined all comment on the circumstances of his expulsion.

Pravda said plainclothesmen grabbed Shorer while he was picking up a container of information placed by the double agent, "Boris N.," in an electrical transformer installation at Botkin Hospital in Leningrad.

The article was accompanied by a photograph showing two metallic cylinders and papers identified in the caption as "espionage equipment, taken from one of the agents of American intelligence."